

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 DPW-01 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USSS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 AF-10 EUR-25 DRC-01 /160 W

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R 020645Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5002

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 2501

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT IS SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN VIEWS RE POWS

REF: TEL AVIV 8769

1. ON OCT 31 SYRIAN DEPUTY FONMIN ABDEL GHANI RIFAI MET WITH CHIEFS OF MISSION ACCREDITED TO SYRIA TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF PRISONERS OF WAR AND GENEVA ACCORDS. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, AS WELL AS REPORT BY USINT DAMASCUS, HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING THAT SARG COMMITTED TO APPLY ALL FOUR GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS, INCLUDING THOSE CONCERNING COMMUNICATION OF NAMES OF POW'S AND RIGHT FOR ICRC TO VISIT THEM. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, SARG COMMITMENT WILL NOT BECOME EFFECTIVE UNTIL ISRAELI GOVT ALSO MAKES PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO APPLY GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS.

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2. RIFAI IS REPORTED BY USINT TO HAVE ALSO SAID THAT

SARG STATED ON OCT 13 ITS COMMITMENT APPLY GENEVA CONVENTIONS, THAT SYRIAN GOVT AND ARMY HAD ABIDED BY CONVENTIONS IN CONDUCT OF WAR, AND THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT RPT NOT STATED SIMILAR COMMITMENT NOR RESPECTED CONVENTIONS DURING WAR. HE CITED LONG LIST OF ALLEGED ISRAELI VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING DELIBERATE BOMBING OF CIVILIAN TARGETS (E.G. DAMASCUS), FORCING SYRIAN PRISONERS TO MARCH IN FRONT OF ISRAELI SOLDIERS INTO MINEFIELDS, AND USE OF ANTI-PERSONNEL BOMBS. RIFAI REPORTED BY USINT TO HAVE SAID THAT DESPITE ISRAELI VIOLATIONS, SARG WILLING RESPECT ITS COMMITMENT BUT ISRAEL HAD TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENT OF SIMILAR INTENT. MOREOVER, ISRAEL HAD TO AGREE TO ALLOW ICRC RETURN BODIES OF DEAD SYRIAN SOLDIERS BEFORE SARG WOULD AGREE TO ISRAELI DEMANDS RE ITS POW'S.

3. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO RELIABLE REPORTS RE TREATMENT BEING GIVEN TO ALL RPT ALL ISRAELI POW'S IN SYRIA, WE NOTE THAT SOME CAPTURED IAF PILOTS HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED IN HOSPITAL BY LEBANESE JOURNALISTS AND CLAIMED THEY RECEIVING GOOD TREATMENT. BUFFUM

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